



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The story of Chelinde is, to be sure, of Oriental origin, as I have shown in *The Romanic Review*, I, 384 ff., but, in whatever part of the Orient it may have ultimately originated, there is no likelihood whatever of these Biblical names having been attached to it until the author of the prose *Tristan* took hold of it. He was evidently responsible for the whole nomenclature of the story in its present form.¹⁶

J. DOUGLAS BRUCE.

University of Tennessee.

THE BIRTH-DATE OF BEN JONSON

The seventeenth-century biographers of Jonson have little to say about the date of his birth. Fuller¹ says that he cannot find him in his cradle. Winstanley² attempts to give no date. Neither does Wood³ nor Blunt⁴ nor Aubrey⁵ nor Langbaine,⁶ but in the eighteenth century we get more definite information. On page 155 of Drummond's *Works*, 1711, is printed a copy of *Und.* vii with the

prose *Tristan*. I had not then discovered, however, that the author of the prose *Tristan* took it from the Bible.

¹⁶ In my edition of the *Historia Meriadoci and de Ortu Waluuanii*, p. xxiii, note 3, I have noted the resemblance between this story and the Greek romances and inferred from this likeness that the source of the prose *Tristan* for the episode was Greek. It reached the French writer very probably through Byzantine channels.

After completing this article, I observe that W. W. Newell, *The Legend of the Holy Grail and the Perceval of Crestien of Troyes*, p. 59 (Cambridge, Mass., 1902), accepts Heinzel's explanation of the origin of Galahad's name, but adds: "Assonance with *Gales*, Wales, may also have had weight." This is all that he says on the subject. I have tried, however, to prove that this assonance was the chief influence involved. J. S. Tunison, *The Graal Problem from Walter Map to Richard Wagner*, p. 34 (Cincinnati, 1904), has also anticipated me, I observe, in deriving "Sarras" from "Sarrasin." He merely remarks: "'Sarras,' as the name of a city, is plainly an effort to give the Saracens a geographical point of origin."

¹ *Worthies*, 1840, II, 424.

² *Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*, 1687, 123.

³ *Athenae Oxon.*, ed. Bliss, II, 612.

⁴ *De Re Poetica*, 1694.

⁵ *Brief Lives*, ed. Clarke, 1898, II, 11.

⁶ *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets*. 1691, 282.

appended date, January 19, 1619.⁷ In this copy Jonson's age is given as forty-six, and if 1619 be read as N. S. 1620, an easy calculation gives his birth as antecedent to January 19, 1574. The accepted date throughout the eighteenth century is 1574,⁸ though the *Biographia Britannica*⁹ is troubled by the Folio version of *Und.* vii. Whalley¹⁰ gives 1574 without discussion or evidence, and in the nineteenth century Chalmers¹¹ gives June 11, 1574, the day of the month being no doubt supplied by the Folio version of *Und.* xcv.¹² The same date is found in the third edition, 1812, of the *Biographia Dramatica*.¹³ Gifford¹⁴ accepts 1574 (but not June 11), and rebukes the editors of the *Biographia Britannica* for their hesitation. Cunningham,¹⁵ rejecting June 11, thinks that Jonson was born probably in 1572, for he notes that after 1600, the Scotch year began on January 1, and that it is unlikely that Jonson should have been born in the first three weeks of 1573: Symonds¹⁶ says "in 1573." Fleay¹⁷ says: "between 1572 Jan. and 1573 Jan.; probably in 1572." Ward¹⁸ is apparently some-

⁷ In the Brit. Mus. copy the month has dropped out, but other copies contain it; cf. Masson's *Life of Drummond*, 1873, 106.

⁸ Chetwood, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Ben Jonson*, 1756.

⁹ 1750, etc., 2775; but in Note (x), 2784, we find 1574 as "confirmed by so many concurring testimonies." The Folio reads 'seven and forty' instead of 'six and forty.'

¹⁰ *Jonson's Works*, 1756, I, xxxiv.

¹¹ *English Poets*, 1810, v, 443. This date cannot possibly be right, whether 1619 be N. S. or O. S.

¹² *The Epigram to Lady Digby* is numbered xcv in Gifford, 1816, xevi in Cunningham's nine-volume edition, and xcvi in his three-volume one. For text, see below.

¹³ Baker, Reed, and Jones; I, 413.

¹⁴ *Jonson's Works*, 1816, I, ii; cf. his note on *Und.* xcv.

¹⁵ Three-vol. ed. (originally issued 1870), I, vii; nine-vol. ed., I, v and 155; ix, 492.

¹⁶ *Ben Jonson*, 1888, I.

¹⁷ *Biog. Chron. of the English Stage*, 1891, I, 340.

¹⁸ In *Encycl. Brit.*, 10th ed.; "about the beginning (N. S.) of the year 1573." In *Hist. of Engl. Dram. Lit.*, 2d ed., 1899, II, 298-9, he says, "in the year 1573," referring to a note in Laing's ed. of *Conversations, O. Sh. Soc.*, 1842, p. 39, in which our attention is first called to the fact of the Scotch year beginning on Jan. 1. In *Encycl. Brit.*, 11th ed., Ward says: "was born, probably in Westminster, in the beginning of the year 1573 (or possibly, if he reckoned by the unadopted modern calendar, 1572; see Castelain, p. 4, note 1)."

what uncertain. An unsuccessful attempt was made by C. T. J. Moore¹⁹ to identify Jonson with "Benjaminus Jonson filius Martini," born at Sutterton, Lincolnshire, Aug. 12, 1574. Herford²⁰ gives Jonson's dates as "1573?-1637," and in the body of the article uses the words, "was born, it is said, in Westminster, in 1572-3." Aronstein²¹ says that Jonson was born in 1572 or 1573, but in any case before Jan. 19, 1573. Castelain²² thinks that the date was probably 1572, and definitively rejects June 11. Schelling²³ states without qualification "in the year 1573." Thorndike²⁴ says: "He was born in Westminster in 1572 or 1573."

If there is no doubt that Jonson was born before Jan. 19, 1573, there is likewise no doubt, as may be calculated from the evidence supplied by Wallace,²⁵ that he was born after May 5, 1572. For, if born on May 5 (or any previous day), 1572, he would have been at least one year old by May 5, 1573, and hence thirty-eight by May 5, 1610. But the deposition found by Wallace fixes his age as thirty-seven on that date. The day of his birth, then, must be sought between May 5, 1572, and January 19, 1573, a period of eight months and thirteen days.²⁶

Before we proceed to a further examination of the question, it may be well to have before us the various bits of evidence usually referred to by writers on the subject.

Und. xcv (xcvi, xcvi, see note 12 above). Folio text.

An Epigram

To my Muse, the Lady Digby, on her
Husband, Sir Kenelme Digby.

¹⁹ *N. & Q.*, 6 Ser., v, 247. Cf. Nicholson, *ibid.*, 354, and G. F. R. B. *ibid.*

²⁰ *D. N. B.*, s. v. Jonson.

²¹ *Ben Jonson*, 1906, 3.

²² *Ben Jonson: L'Homme et l'Œuvre*, 1907, 3-4 and notes.

²³ *Eliz. Drama*, 1908, 465.

²⁴ *Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, vi, 3 (English ed.).

²⁵ C. W. Wallace, *The Swan Theatre and the Earl of Pembroke's Men*, *Engl. St.*, XLIII., 369, note 2.

²⁶ I see no reason why an editor of Jonson should reject the Folio reading 'seven-and-forty' in *Und.* vii, since, though (as suggested by Castelain and myself independently) it might be due to an over-zealous editor, there is also the possibility that the poem might have been revised by Jonson himself in the following year, as I pointed out in *Anglia* XXXVII, 490. The differences between the two versions are interesting and important.

Tho', happy Muse, thou know my Digby well;
 Yet read him in these lines: He doth excell
 In honour, courtesie, and all the parts
 Court can call hers, or Man could call his Arts.
 Hee's prudent, valiant, just, and temperate; 5
 In him all vertue is beheld in State:
 And he is built like some imperiall roome
 For that to dwell in, and be still at home.
 His brest is a brave Palace, a broad Street
 Where all herioque ample thoughts doe meet: 10
 Where Nature such a large survey hath ta'en,
 As other soules to his dwelt in a Lane:
 Witnessse his Action done at Scanderone;
 Upon my Birth-day the eleventh of June;
 When the Apostle Barnabee the bright 15
 Unto our yeare doth give the longest light,
 In signe the Subject, and the Song will live
 Which I have vow'd posteritie to give.
 Goe, Muse, in, and salute him. Say he be
 Busie, 'or frowne at first; when he sees thee, 20
 He will cleare up his forehead: thinke thou bring'st
 Good Omen to him, in the note thou sing'st,
 For he doth love my Verses, and will looke
 Upon them, (next to Spenser's noble booke.)
 And praise them too. O! what a fame 't will be? 25
 What reputation to my lines, and me,
 When hee shall read them at the Treasurers bord?
 The knowing Weston, and that learned Lord
 Allowses them? Then, what copies shall be had,
 What transcripts begg'd? how cry'd up, and how glad, 30
 Wilt thou be, Muse, when this shall them befall?
 Being sent to one, they will be read of all.

12mo. variants from F text in *Q. Horatius Flaccus: His Art of Poetry. Englished By Ben: Jonson. With other Workes John Benson. 1640, p. 122.*

Title To Sir Kenelme Digby. An Epigram.

2	read] take	4	would	8	that] those
3	Honours	6	vertue] action	12	others . . . dwell
13	Witnessse his birth-day, the eleventh of June,				
14	And his great action done at Scanderoone.				
15	That day, which I predestin'd am to sing,				
16	For Brittain's honour, and to Charles my King:				
17-8	(Omit these two lines)				
21	cheare	27	shall] doth	30	begg'd] made
22	Omen] fortune	29	will	31	them] then

MS. Ashmole 174, ff. 75-9, contains a horoscope as well as an enumeration of striking incidents in Digby's early life.

In the figure the date of his birth is given as

1603. Julij, iuxta computū vet. Anglic.

D. H. M. “

10. 17 30 4 Post Merid.

Below:

“according to the English account the 11. of July betweene 5. and 6. of the clocke in the morning, wch is the 10th day of that moneth, and 17. houres and a halfe after noone according to the reformed Calender it is so many houres after the 20th day ”

MS. Ashmole 36, f. 117, contains the following lines, ordinarily attributed to Richard Ferrar. They have been several times printed, and doubtless other *MS.* copies exist.

An Epitaph on the Learned Sr Kenelme
Digby, who died the 11th of June 1665.

Under this Tombe the matchless Digby lyes
Digby the great, the valiant & the wise;
This ages wonder for his noble parts,
Skild in six Tongues, & learn'd in all the Arts;
Borne on the day he died, the 11th of June,
And that day bravely fought at Scanderoone,
Tis rare that one & the same day should bee,
His day of Birth, & death & Victory.

Now the editors²⁷ of Jonson, beginning with Whalley, and all of the more important critics, have accepted “his” for “my” in line 14 of the *Epigram*, though at the same time they have refused to accept the other 12mo alterations in the text of the poem. In other words, their position has apparently²⁸ been that the Folio text is the proper text except that in this line some blunder has been committed by the editor or printer. But who was the editor? Digby himself, as has been quite recently pointed out.²⁹ It is quite true that the proof-reading on the volume was not carefully done (though there are numerous signs that it was by no means entirely

²⁷ That is, the important editors. Chalmers does not, but as pointed out above, note 11, his date must be wrong either as to day or as to year.

²⁸ I say ‘apparently,’ as no full discussion of the *textual* problems offered by this poem or by the Folio of 1640 in general, has ever been published.

²⁹ W. W. Greg, *Handlist of English Plays*, etc., Bibl. Soc., 1900, 56.

neglected), but such a mistake as this is not likely to have been passed over. Moreover, the Folio text of *Underwoods* as a whole, is, I believe, much more reliable than it has generally been thought to be, and this fact, not yet fully demonstrated to the public,³⁰ constitutes a further support for the reading "my" in this instance.

What are the grounds on which editors have discarded "my"? Whalley,³¹ after saying, "We have a slight corruption . . . *my* should be *his*" ("slight corruption" is good, very good), attacks Antony Wood:³² 1) for asserting that, though Digby was born on July 11, 1603, yet Jonson changed July to June for rime's sake; 2) for asserting that the battle of Scanderoon was fought on the 16th of June; and 3) for quoting two lines of Ferrar's epitaph and yet disputing "the authority of our poet for the time of his [Digby's] birth."

The second of the three points mentioned by Whalley need not detain us, for he shows that the battle of Scanderoon was fought on the 11th of June, not the 16th, as, indeed, we know from other sources³³ than the descriptive pamphlet that formed his authority.

In regard to the first point Whalley offers no proof (probably he knew nothing of the horoscope). The notion that Jonson changed July to June for rime's sake³⁴ is grotesque enough, and Whalley doubtless thought that it needed no refutation. Jonson was not the man to tamper with history in that fashion.

Now, the date of Digby's birth is not recorded elsewhere than in the horoscope, the Benson version of the poem, and the epitaph.

³⁰ I have touched on this matter in "Studies in Ben Jonson," *Anglia* xxxvii, 486 ff.; xxxviii, 115 ff.

³¹ *Jonson's Works*, 1756, vii, 10.

³² *Athenae Oxon.*, ed. Bliss, iii, 688.

³³ Digby's *Journal of a Voyage into the Mediterranean*, ed. Bruce, Camden Soc., 1868, 38.

³⁴ Wood, l. c., Digby "was born at Gothurst on the eleventh day * of July 1603, (1 Jac. 1.) yet Ben. Johnson for rhyme sake will have † it June, thus;

Witness thy action done at Scanderoon

Upon thy birth-day the eleventh of June."

There is no authority for the reading 'thy' in either line.

* As in the book of nativities collected by Dr. Rich. Napier of Buckinghamshire, ms. in the hands of Elias Ashmole, esq.; and in an almanack for 1673, published by Joh. Gadbury.

† In his *Underwoods*, p. 243 [245].

Benson's version has no authority as a text,³⁵ but, it will be observed, might easily enough have supplied the information for Ferrar, the writer of the epitaph. He might have accepted a tradition as to the coincidence of the day of Digby's birth with that of the battle, and this tradition might have had its start in the Benson version. Of this there were two impressions, in 4to and in 12mo, and there is some reason to suppose that these two volumes were well known in the seventeenth century. The picturesqueness of the coincidence, in an age much given to laying serious as well as sportive stress on such *nugae*, would have been favorable to the persistence of a tradition of the kind.

As for the horoscope, Gifford³⁶ treated it with derision, but apparently had not seen it, for all that he says is with reference to a vague remark by Aubrey: "Mr. Elias Ashmole assures me from two or three nativities by Dr. Napier, that Ben Jonson was mistaken, and did it for the Rhyme sake."³⁷ "We have here a couple of dreamers—but they are not worth an argument," says Gifford, who believed, with the Lady of Mumpers' Dingle, that there is "nothing like Long Melford for shortness all the world over." Yet we have the best assurance³⁸ that the nativity given above is in Digby's own hand. There is, then, no difficulty in understanding why Digby allowed the Folio reading "my," to pass. Is it not barely possible that, as an intimate friend of Jonson, he may have known the day of Jonson's birth, just as he may reasonably be supposed to have known the day of his own? I do not see why we should disturb the Folio reading on the authority of the semi-piratical issues of John Benson or on the authority of Ferrar's

³⁵ Cf. my article, cited above, note 30.

³⁶ 1816, ix, 47 note.

³⁷ *Brief Lives*, ed. Clarke, i, 224. Aubrey gives the Napier nativities, which do not seem to agree as to hours with *Ash.* 174 (though Bruce, *v. infra*, says that the Ashmole volume is identical with the Napier collection mentioned by Wood. Wood does not give the nativities), nor with each other.

³⁸ *D. N. B.*, s. v. Digby; cf. Bruce, *Digby's Journal*, u. s., xi. Macray, of the Bodleian, agreed with Bruce. Bruce accepts the ms. as decisive with respect to Digby's birth, and thinks Ben Jonson and Ferrar mistaken. Ferrar undoubtedly was, but the point of this article is to show that Jonson was not pronouncing as to Digby's birth, but as to his own. Bruce very naturally accepted the edited text of Whalley and Gifford, and would seem to have known nothing of the Folio reading, "my."

epitaph, which may very well have derived its own authority from them.

Up to this point we have been merely re-valuing evidence that has long been known to exist. There is, however, another bit of evidence that has not been hitherto mentioned and that strongly supports the conclusions reached.

I gave *all* of the variant readings of the 12mo for a particular purpose, namely, to show that the 12mo version belongs to a quite different recension of the poem from that represented by the Folio. A few of the differences (ll. 3, 4, 12, 21, 29, 31) have no significance for our present argument, though they have a value from other points of view. The rest, however, and particularly those in ll. 13-18, are of a quite different character.

There are four ways of accounting for these differences. We may suppose, if we choose, that the 12mo readings did not proceed from Jonson, but were entirely due to copyists or printers. The supposition is a violent one, considering the character of some of them, but perhaps not absurd. Yet, if we make it, we must remember that the reading "his birthday" will go down in the common ruin; it shares the fate of the others.

We may suppose that the 12mo version is the true text throughout, that all of its readings are sound, and that the Folio readings are corrupt. This supposition does such violence to probabilities that it has been tacitly rejected by all the editors of Jonson, who take over from the 12mo only the one reading in question, and is at variance with all that we know of the history of the two volumes.

We may again suppose that the 12mo, though giving us an unrevised and hence inferior text in general, preserves the true reading in this instance, and that the Folio displays the blunder of scribe or compositor. This supposition would seem to be the one which, as earlier remarked, has been generally adopted in ignorance of the fact that the reading "my birthday" had apparently been passed by Digby and in ignorance of the true value attaching to the evidence concerning Sir Kenelm's birthday.

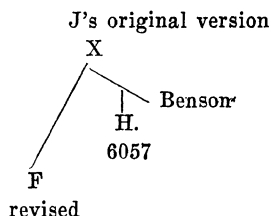
Finally, we may suppose that the 12mo represents on the whole an earlier version of the poem, which Jonson later revised into the Folio form, and that the reading "his" was a blunder of copyist or printer for which he is in no way responsible and which is easily explicable if we note the "his" occurring just above in lines 12

and 13. This is the supposition that agrees best with the argument up to this point.

Now, if we should encounter a copy of the poem which belongs to the 12mo recension and yet in this particular reading agrees with the Folio, should we not have almost what Bacon calls an *experimentum crucis*? Such a copy exists in *MS. Harl. 6057*, f. 20. The title differs somewhat, and there are enough minor differences to show that the copy was not made directly from the 12mo. But almost all of the variants in the 12mo list above are to be found in it. The important passage runs:

13. Wittnesse my birthday the Eleaventh of June
14. and his action done att Scanderoone
15. that day which I predestinde am to sing
16. for Brittains honor, and to Charles my kinge

and ll. 17-18 are omitted.



The statement that Jonson was born on the 11th of June apparently belongs to both recensions of the poem. The statement that the 11th of June was Digby's birthday is apparently wrong. The day falls within our assigned limits, May 5, 1572, Jan. 19, 1573. We have no evidence in the shape of birth registrations or certificates, but in default of these we have, if our argument is sound, made it highly probable, almost certain, that Jonson was born on the day in question, and we have established in one more important case the comparative trustworthiness of the Folio text of *Underwoods*.

WILLIAM DINSMORE BRIGGS.

Stanford University.